

Message Text

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ACTION SS-15

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FM AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4234

INFO AMEMBASSY MASERU IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY GABORONE IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY PORT LOUIS IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOGADISCIO 1541

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY SCHAUFELLE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SO

SUBJECT: US/SOMALI RELATIONS: POSSIBLE SIAD/SCHAUFELLE MEETING

REF: LONDON 15222

1. AT A DIPLOMATIC LEVEE MARKING THE END OF RAMADAN
ON SEPTEMBER 25, THE CHARGE HAD A FEW MINUTES PRIVATE
CONVERSATION WITH SOMALI PRESIDENT MOHAMED SIAD BARRE ON
THE STATE OF US/SOMALI RELATIONS.

2. CHARGE TOOK THE OPPORTUNITRETO REITERATE THE US' CONTINUING
DESIRE TO IMPROVE BILATERAL RELATIONS, AS EXPRESSED IN
THE SIAD/FORD EXCHANGE OF LETTERS. SIAD REPLIED THAT
HE, TOO, WANTED BETTER RELATIONS. AFTER ALL, HE SAID,
SOMALIA IS A SMALL COUNTRY WITH FEW OVERSEAS INTERESTS
AND NOTHING TO GAIN BY ATTACKING THE U.S. MOREOVER, THE
GSDR IS FULLY OCCUPIED WITH THE STRUGGLE AGAINST THE
ASSOCIATED PROBLEMS OF UNDERDEVELOPMENT AND HAS NO DESIRE
TO BE DIVERTED FROM THIS TASK. BUT, SAID SIAD, THE BURDEN

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OF PROOF FOR AN IMPROVEMENT IN US/SOMALI RELATIONS IS
ON THE US. THE US MUST SHOW GOOD WILL, "AS HE (PRESIDENT
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FORD) PROMISED" TO DO IN HIS LETTER. CHARGE ENDED BY SAYING

THE US WOULD WELCOME A FULL AND FRANK DIALOGUE WITH THE
GSDR IN ORDER TO CLARIFY POSITIONS ON BOTH SIDES AND
TO TRY TO ELIMINATE MISUNDERSTANDINGS.

3. IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE THEN OR LATER TO VERIFY THAT SIAD
PLANS TO ATTEND LESOTHO INDEPENDENCE CELEBRATIONS (REFTEL.
WE ARE CHECKING OTHER SOURCES. SHOULD SIAD GO TO LESOTHO,
HOWEVER, AND HE ASKS TO SEE ASSISTANT SECRETARY SCHAUFEELE WE
THINK IT WOULD BE USEFUL (IN ADDITION TO ANY OTHER SUBJECT
MATTER) TO ENCOURAGE A FREER EXCHANGE OF VIEWS AS A FIRST
STEP IN IMPROVING BILATERAL RELATIONS. PRACTICALLY SPEAKING,
THAT MEANS LOWERING GSDR RESTRICTIONS ON CONTACTS BETWEEN
US DEIPLOMATS AND GSDR OFFICIALS AND ON US OFFICIAL
TRAVEL AROUND SOMALIA, AS WELL AS TONING DOWN ANTI-US
ATMOSPHERICS. FOR THE LAST FEW WEEKS, FOR EXAMPLE, THE
OFFICIAL MEDIA HAVE BEEN DEPICTING SECRETARY KISSINGER'S
SHUTTLE DIPLOMACY IN SOUTHERN AFRICA AS A LAST-DITCH
US EFFORT TO SAVE COLONIALISM AND APARTHEID. WITHOUT
IMPROVED WORKING-LEVEL CONTACTS AND A LESS FEVERISH OFFICIAL
STANCE WITH RESPECT TO THE US, IT SEEMS TO US, IT WILL BE
VERY DIFFICULT TO CONDUCT ANY KIND OF TRUE DIALOGUE.
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